

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 12474

EXDIS

FOR MATHEA FALCO, S/NM

EO 11652: XGDS

TAGS: SNAR, MX

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS - "PERCY AMENDMENT"

1. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S EXECUTIVE OFFICER, FERNANDO BAEZA, TELEPHONED EMBASSY MORNING OF AUGUST ONE TO SAY THAT ON HIS RETURN FROM DEA-SPONSORED CONFERENCE IN LIMA, HE FOUND A REPORT FROM MEXICAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON THAT AN AMENDMENT SPONSORED BY SENATOR PERCY WOULD CUT FUNDS TO GOM ERADICATION PROGRAM UNLESS GOM CEASED USING PARAQUAT.

2. BAEZA SAID HE HAD A LONG TALK WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL FLORES AND WANTED EMBASSY TO BE AWARE OF FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) GOM, AT USG INVITATION, SENT A TEAM OF ITS HERBICIDE SPECIALISTS TO WASHINGTON FOR MEETINGS WITH USG SPECIALISTS FROM STATE, AGRICULTURE, EPA, AND HEW.

(B) GOM SPECIALISTS RETURNED WITH CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT USG INVESTIGATION OF POSSIBLE EFFECTS TO HEALTH OF THOSE WHO MIGHT USE MARIJUANA SPRAYED WITH PARAQUAT WAS SHALLOW
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AND INCONCLUSIVE.

(C) GOM SPECIALISTS NEVERTHELESS ASKED USG SPECIALISTS TO SUGGEST ALTERNATE HERBICIDES WHICH ARE SUPERIOR TO PARAQUAT AS FAR AS ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND EFFECTIVENESS ARE CONCERNED. GOM SPECIALISTS RECEIVED NO DEFINITIVE ANSWERS AND WERE TOLD THAT LITTLE WAS KNOWN

ABOUT EFFECTS OF SMOKING MARIJUANA SPRAYED WITH ANY
HERBICIDE.

(D) BAEZA REITERATED THAT MEXICO'S INTERNAL DRUG PROBLEM CENTERED ON MARIJUANA AND THAT GOM HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO ITS OWN CITIZENS TO DEVOTE ITS RESOURCES TO THE DESTRUCTION OF MARIJUANA. THUS FAR, USG COOPERATION MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR MEXICO TO ATTACK ITS OWN PROBLEM, MARIJUANA, IN A MORE EFFECTIVE MANNER WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY ATTACKING THE OPIUM POPPY WHICH IS OF PRIMARY CONCERN TO THE U.S. HOWEVER, SHOULD THE USG CEASE TO PROVIDE RESOURCES FOR THE ERADICATION CAMPAIGN, BAEZA SAID MEXICO WOULD HAVE TO DEVOTE ITS RESOURCES PRIMARILY TO ERADICATION OF MARIJUANA, USING PARAQUAT OR WHATEVER OTHER HERBICIDE IS SUPERIOR AS CONCERNS EFFECTIVENESS AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

3. COMMENT: BAEZA SOUNDED BOTH PERPLEXED AND DISGUSTED THAT USG WOULD, WITHOUT MEANINGFUL TEST DATA, REQUIRE GOM TO ABANDON USE OF PARAQUAT WHEN THE USG'S OWN ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH, AND AGRICULTURAL EXPERTS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO RECOMMEND MORE SUITABLE PRODUCT. HE REFERRED BACK TO PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT IN WHICH HE WONDERED WHETHER USG WAS INDEED SERIOUS ABOUT NARCOTICS CONTROL. PURPOSE OF CALL WAS CLEARLY TO LET US KNOW THAT POPPY ERADICATION WOULD SUFFER IF USG WITH-
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HOLDS FUNDS FOR COMBINED MARIJUANA/POPPY ERADICATION PROGRAM. LUCEY

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Message Attributes

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